

# LINKS PLAYERS

DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR APRIL 20, 2012

## THE INSIDE AND THE OUTSIDE

*“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” (Matthew 3:12, NIV)*

GOLFERS ARE FREQUENTLY CARICATURED BY THE CLOTHES THEY WEAR. Once it was knickers and tassels, later spandex and plaid. Now, thanks to Rickie Fowler and some others, perhaps it is neons and flatbills. Actually, the good news for all of us may be that golfers don’t have to look one way or another these days—many looks are acceptable.

Of course, none of this really tells us how good a player is. You can hop online or head to a golf superstore and pick up the exact shirts Fowler and several others will sport each day of a major. You can buy Rory’s sunglasses or snatch up a matching pair of Yani’s shorts. You’ll be a look-alike, but can you play the game?

Much of Jesus’ teaching had to do with the inside versus the outside of a person. We noted yesterday how he wants true, spiritual worship—the kind that comes from the heart. But it was John the Baptist, in his trailblazing prophetic words about Jesus who first challenged the religious types on the content of their hearts. His words, though, didn’t apply only to the Pharisees and other hyper-adherent observers. All of us need a heart check.

One of John’s more remarkable indicators of how different Jesus would be was the way the Baptist discounted his own baptisms. “These are just symbols,” he said in essence. “Like a washing of clothes, they serve a purpose. They indicate that you really *want* to be cleaned up, you really *want* to change.”

But then he went on: “The changing—the real work deep inside you—that is ‘above my paygrade.’ For that you’ll need the one to come. You’ll need Jesus.”

And indeed Jesus came. He came with the words and power of God. He came with the promise of the Holy Spirit. And he came with the ability to make a heart new, to purify it in preparation for eternity. That’s why, religious or not, we need his greater baptism. We need to say, “Lord, it’s time for more than a rinse. I want you to clean me up for good!”

## A new baptism

*Read Acts 19:1-7.* What happened to these men when they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus? What are indications in a person’s life that the Lord has really “gotten hold” of them?

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## Christ’s cleansing

*Read Ephesians 5:25-27.* How does Christ prepare us for God’s presence? What do you think it means that he “washes us with water through the word”? What is the result of this work he does in us?

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## The power of purity

*Read 1 Peter 3:1-2.* We know that purity comes from Jesus (1 John 1:9) when we are humble and confessing before him. What does Peter say this purity has the power to do? How would the purity of Christ in your own life make a difference in your relationships with others?

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